

DAAD Rise Professional Final Report

By: Mohammad Nazari

"I agree that my report and accompanying pictures may be used by the DAAD in printed materials, presentations, and on websites in order to inform funding organizations, sponsors, and students about the RISE program."

As a chemist with an experience of working in chemical industry, I knew that so many giant chemical companies are located in Germany. Thus, it has been a matter of significant interest for me to find my way into a German company to learn how they manage to be always pioneer in the world. It was such a wonderful coincidence for me that I found my way into one of the events organized by DAAD in Toronto leading me to know about Rise Professional Program. Through the list of the companies offering internship in Germany through this program, the name of BASF caught my eyes as world's largest chemical company on this planet. Among various positions offered by this outstanding company, I put the position offered by department of "Global Marketing and Product Development Automotive Fluids" regarding engine coolants as my top priority because of my personal experience in this field as well as attractive type of work offered by them.

After completing my application via DAAD website, I received one of the most thrilling emails of my life from my current manager at BASF, Dr. Daneil Wilm, stating kindly that they are willing to accept me as an intern in their department. Being so excited, I started the official paperwork with DAAD Rise Professional Program, Human Resource department at BASF and German consulate in Toronto to apply for visa. Kind staff in DAAD helped me a lot to accelerate the process of visa application. Also, BASF introduced me to their contractor, which was a relocation office in Germany and they commenced to help me before coming to Germany which was greatly helpful for me. On the side, I had several telephone meeting before coming to Germany with my manager as well as my very kind mentor, Dr. Masayuki Hirose, at BASF.

On the first day of arrival to Germany, I went very conveniently with a taxi, which was arranged by my department at BASF, from Frankfurt Airport to Mannheim, where my apartment was located. Then, by help of relocation office, I received my apartment keys, opened bank account, received my company identity card as well as getting my semester-ticket allowing me to commute with all forms of public transportation to Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg and some other cities nearby.

On my first day at BASF, after an orientation session organized by Human Resource, I was warmly welcomed by my manager and my mentor. Then, I was introduced to other colleagues. I was astonishingly provided with a very big and bright office space, PC and all brand new office equipment. I really noticed this fact that how everything is greatly in advance organized representing the so-called German Discipline.

In the following days, I had several meetings regarding the details of my project. On the side, I have had multiple safety trainings in order to begin my tasks in the lab. There was a significant emphasis on safety at work and I received a complete set of necessary safety equipment and clothing. Thereafter, I started my lab work in an excellent environment in terms of the most automated and updates apparatus. Moreover, the staff in the lab was very friendly and approachable. I did not feel myself at all alone and isolated in the lab without any help and support. We have had every day a coffee break with the staff in the lab letting me to learn more about the structure and culture of the company. All these parameters together helped me surprisingly to run my project away faster than I expected.

Also, as a side project, I was given also this opportunity to update some old technical documents in our department at BASF, which helped me to develop some other aspects of my capabilities such as team work and professional communication. What I really noticed during this stage of my work was how the members of the team smoothly and rapidly are working together in order to achieve their final goals.

My career life at BASF was not only confined to what I mentioned above. I have visited 4 different places inside BASF company via organized tours including steam cracker factory, agricultural research centre, carbon dioxide factory and wastewater treatment plant. That made me to obtain a broader and more diverse overview regarding how different segments of such a complex company operate. Furthermore, multiple lunch meetings have been organized by my mentor and I have known people from different backgrounds from other departments at BASF, which was a unique opportunity to expand my network.

At the end of my internship at BASF, I was invited to a lunch meeting by my manager and mentor. I was received very positive appreciation and feedbacks from the time we have spent together. Finally, I presented my project to other group members.

Outside of my career life, I have been able to travel easily to other cities across Germany and other European countries. My colleagues gave me lots of tips about how to travel in a cheap and convenient way. I have visited Heidelberg, Nuremberg, Black Forest, Lübeck, Hamburg, Hannover, Kassel, Bühlertal and Freiburg inside Germany. Outside of Germany, I visited Salzburg (Austria), Luxembourg city (Luxembourg), Strasbourg (France), Prague (Czech Republic), Interlaken (Switzerland), Bern (Switzerland) and Luzern (Switzerland). I will never forget this adventurous summer of my life in terms of multiple place I have visited.

Furthermore, I participated in DAAD Rise Professional meeting in the first weekend of July 2018 in Heidelberg. We have been treated nicely in a beautiful hotel there, which was located at the city centre. I really enjoyed spending time with other scholarship holders from DAAD Rise Professional program from Canada, USA, England and Ireland. On the side of all formal part of the meeting, we have had sufficient time to explore the beautiful city of Heidelberg.

At the end, I would like to kindly express my gratitude to all DAAD Rise Professional Program staff, all sponsors of this program, my academic supervisor at York University, Prof. Sylvie Morin, all my wonderful colleagues at BASF, especially Dr. Daniel Wilms and Dr. Masayuki Hirose. I extremely recommend all graduate students who are eligible to apply for this program to not miss this life-changing opportunity in their lives.

Sincerely Yours,

Mohammad Nazari

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Ludwigshafen, Germany